

Public Health Closes Illegal Tattoo Operation in Clayton

DOVER – The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) closed a Clayton body art business December 5, 2016, that was operating without a permit for violation of regulations under Title 16 of the Delaware Code. The operation had no official name and was run out of a private home at 253 Christiana River Drive in Clayton without the required body art establishment permit. In addition to operating without a permit and being entirely unregulated, DPH staff were unable to confirm proper sanitary precautions were used.

DPH encourages customers who may have received services at this location to contact their health care provider for evaluation for diseases such as hepatitis and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that may have been transmitted through unsterile equipment. Tell the doctor about receiving a tattoo from an unregulated tattoo parlor, when it occurred, and any symptoms since the visit.

When in doubt, DPH recommends seeking testing for HIV and hepatitis. It is possible to carry these viruses for years without knowing it due to lack of symptoms, and, even if the virus cannot be traced to the closed tattoo parlor, knowing one's HIV and hepatitis status can help get treatment and prevent further spread of these viruses.

The unregulated tattoo parlor kept no client records and, as a result, DPH cannot follow the normal protocol of contacting individuals by letter to urge them to seek medical testing. DPH is trying to spread the word by press releases, social media, alerting medical providers, and local community leaders.

Delawareans served by the illegal operation can also contact the DPH Communicable Disease Bureau at 302-744-1050 if they

have questions about potential transmission risks.

“No one should ever seek body art services from an unlicensed business,” said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. “Establishments regulated by DPH are inspected and must meet requirements for sanitation, proper disposal of needles, use of gloves, and many other items. HIV and hepatitis can all too easily be transmitted if proper precautions are not taken. Before getting any kind of body art done, people should always insist on seeing the DPH permit which is required to be posted in an obvious place.”

DPH learned about the illegal establishment from a Facebook tip. It is unknown how many customers were served or how long the operation was in business at this time. The investigation is ongoing.

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind, or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit delawarerelay.com.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, drink almost no sugary beverages.